



Childhood Connections

December 5, 2023

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Missouri is Available Statewide



Photo Credit: The Dollywood Foundation

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library launched statewide in all Missouri zip codes on November 8, 2023.

Missourians set a record 22,000 registrations on the first day!

The tremendous response of Missouri parents overwhelmed the national website, and it was taken offline for several hours. The momentum hasn't stopped; there have been over 111,000 active children registered to date.

If you are a parent looking for a Christmas gift for your child who is birth to age five, consider registering them today.

Visit www.imaginationlibrary.com under "Check Availability" to complete the registration form.

Additionally, if you are looking for promotional materials or information on how the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Missouri works, [visit the landing page on our website](#).

COMING SOON! Child Care Data System

The Office of Childhood (OOC) expects to launch the new Child Care Data System (CCDS) later this month for parents applying for child care assistance, and the system opens next month for child care providers contracted to receive state payment for child care services.

The CCDS will consolidate multiple outdated systems into a single web-based system for child care subsidy. The system will make it easier to process parent applications and eligibility determinations as well as provider applications,



UPDATE! Office of Childhood Contact Information

Did you know OOC publishes a [printable Contact Us document](#) that includes the phone numbers and email addresses for every program administered by OOC?

authorizations, and payments. Users (e.g., parents, providers, state staff) will be able to enter, change, and view information in real time, as long as their security clearance permits access to the information. This system will improve accountability and reduce confusion when users can view the same information at the same time.

The CCDS also provides centralized messaging to and from providers through a message board and a chat feature, which allows providers to chat live to obtain assistance.

For more information, review [this informational flyer](#). Stay tuned for more information coming soon - OOC is working on a new webpage with information about the system (e.g. information flyers, checklists, and training materials).

REMINDER! Check Clock Hours in Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) System

The end of the year is coming soon. If you are a child care professional required to complete clock hours, be sure to check your completed clock hour training list to see if you are 'In Compliance' for all years listed on your report. To understand your report, please read the instructions for [Individual Reports](#) in the MOPD User Instructions.

Each user must have an MOPD System Membership in order to have training records appear on program reports connected with their employer. For help with completing this required step, refer to the written instructions: [Apply for registry profile membership](#).

For questions about what counts for clock hours, visit the [Professional Development website](#) or email mopd@dese.mo.gov.

NEW! Child Care Collaborative Networks Available

There are three child care collaborative networks now offering coaching and technical assistance to child care programs: home based network, infant/toddler network, and preschool network. The networks provide similar services, however, they are customized to address the unique needs that come with the different provider types and ages served.

There is also an accompanying [What We Do webpage](#) that lists the section and team leaders for OOC programs.

Both of these pages were recently updated with current contact information.

REMINDER! New MOPD System Phone Number

The Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) system has a new phone number.

Please call **573-526-8273** for any questions about using the MOPD system or email mopd@dese.mo.gov.

REMINDER! Early Childhood State Advisory Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) will be held virtually on **Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 12:30 p.m.**

The agenda and related presentation materials will be posted on the [ECSAC meeting webpage](#) approximately one week before the meeting.

NEW! Scholarships for Home Visitors

Enrollment for home visitors to receive a

Services include clock hour trainings on best practices, in-person cohort training that will take a group of individuals through a six-month community of practice that will focus on shared interest, professional growth, networking opportunities, and onsite coaching and consultation.

Visit the [OOC Quality Initiatives webpage](#) to select the network that's right for your program.

NEW! Start-up Grants Available

OOC is pleased to announce start-up grants are now available to open a new, licensed child care program in child care desert areas in Missouri. Please review the **Instructions** and **Terms & Conditions** closely on the [Start-up Licensed Program webpage](#) if you are interested in this funding opportunity.

- Applicants must submit a paper application. An online application is not available for this grant.
- Applications are due by **February 6, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.**
- Awarded programs must be licensed by August 31, 2024. There will be no additional extensions to this deadline due to the funding for this grant is American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Discretionary and these funds expire in September 2024.

Contact ChildCareRelief@dese.mo.gov or call **573-415-8951, extension 1**, if you have questions about this funding opportunity.

REMINDER! Referral Resources Now Available

Using American Rescue Plan (ARP) relief funds, the OOC worked with a vendor to develop *The Welcome to First Steps for Families* and the *First Steps Information for Referral Sources* videos. Both videos are available in closed captioning in English and Spanish.

The videos can be found on the [First Steps Parent Information webpage](#) under the Referral and Eligibility drop-down.

In addition, the OOC created a [new one-pager titled "Referral Sources: Who Can Make A Referral to First Steps?"](#)

T.E.A.C.H. MISSOURI Child Development Associate (CDA) scholarship begins December 2023. For more information, email Child Care Aware® of Missouri at: info@mochildcareaware.org.

NEW! Now Open: 2023 Lead Poisoning Prevention Mini-Grants

The National Center for Healthy Housing is offering 2023 Lead Poisoning Prevention Mini-Grants to increase rural community capacity for lead poisoning prevention.

These mini-grants are funded through a cooperative agreement with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Local, regional, U.S. territorial, or state nonprofit and community-based organizations may apply.

To learn more or apply, visit the [National Center for Healthy Housing webpage](#).

UPDATE! Child Care Subsidy Webpages

The child care subsidy team has recently reorganized some information on the website to make it easier to find.

We hope these videos help both families and referral sources to understand the First Steps program and make a referral when appropriate.

REMINDER! Child Care Providers Should Ensure Tight-Fitting Sheets



For licensed and subsidy providers that care for infants:

Remember to ensure sheets under children in cribs and playpens are tight-fitting to prevent the risk of suffocation or entrapment.

Family Home rule 5 CSR 25-400.095(1)(B)2.C. and Group Home/Center rule 5 CSR 25-500.092(1)(B)2.D. state: "The crib mattress or playpen pad shall be sized correctly to the crib or playpen, in good condition, waterproof, and kept clean and dry, be firm and maintain its shape even when the fitted sheet designated for that model is used, such that there are no gaps between the mattress and the side of the crib or playpen. Only fitted sheets shall be used and shall be changed immediately when soiled or wet."

[Licensing rules can be found on the DESE webpage.](#)

Child Care Subsidy Contract for Services Terms and Conditions 2.24 states, "The provider is required to undergo an initial review before the contract takes effect and annually thereafter. This review includes the following:

- a. Participate in an unannounced onsite visit, which includes a review of the following:
 - iii. Safe Sleep practices (infant cribs, sleep area, safe sleep practices)."

A new Child Care Subsidy Program Information button has been added to the [main landing page](#) where you will find rules and regulations, as well as information for families and providers.

More changes will be made in the coming weeks as the launch of the new Child Care Data System approaches.

REMINDER! Holiday Toy Recalls

The holidays are a wonderful time of year filled with cheer, presents, and fun. Shopping for and giving gifts to children brings joy to us all.

It's important to keep in mind during this joy that some toys may have been recalled for being unsafe.

Adults should take time to [check the latest recall list](#) before letting children play with new toys over the holidays.

NEW! 2024 Powerful Learning Conference Registration Open

The Powerful Learning Conference provides professional learning to help educators implement effective, evidence-based practices that aim to improve learning for every student in every school district.

[Child Care Subsidy Terms and Conditions can be found on this DESE webpage.](#)

UPDATE! Proposed Rule for Licensed Group Child Care Homes and Centers

We wanted to share an update on the proposed rule updates to 5 CSR 25-500 that were filed in June 2023. The proposed amendments allow for 16 and 17-year-olds to count in staff/child ratio, add group size limits for children 3 years of age and older, and clarify when staff/child ratios and group sizes apply throughout the day.

The public comment period for these rule amendments ended August 17, 2023. The Orders of Rulemaking that address public comments are now available for review in the December 1, 2023, edition of the Missouri Register. The rule updates are still working their way through the rulemaking process and are not effective at this time. OOC will communicate further updates once available.

To view the proposed rule updates, [visit the DESE webpage.](#)

Visit the [Missouri Secretary of State's webpage](#) to view the Missouri Register.

UPDATE! 2024 Conference on the Young Years: Registration Opens Tomorrow



OOC is pleased to announce that registration for the 2024 Conference on the Young Years (CYY) opens **tomorrow, December 6, 2023**. The theme for the 51st conference is “Explore the Possibilities.”

The conference will be **March 7-9, 2024**, at Tan-Tar-A Conference Center. A wonderful lineup of keynote, featured, and breakout presenters are scheduled, equaling over 130 sessions to choose from. The Missouri Association for the Education of

Registration is now open for the 2024 Powerful Learning Conference.

The conference will be held January 29-30, 2024, at Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach.

Early-bird registration ends **Saturday, December 16, 2023**.

[Visit the webpage to view the conference brochure and to register.](#)

IMPORTANT! Self-Care Tips for Family Services Professionals and Home Visitors

[Visit the federal Office of Head Start page to learn tips to support individual and staff wellness.](#)

Some examples of evidence-informed ways to practice self-care include taking time for mindfulness, building relaxation into your day, practicing self-compassion, taking care of your physical self, connecting with others, and partnering with leadership.

ANNOUNCEMENT! Child Care Enrollment Forms

Missourians who speak Spanish as a primary language can now find the [child care enrollment forms for licensed and license-exempt facilities in Spanish on our website.](#)

Young Children will also be hosting their second annual celebration at CYY.

There are still a few spots for exhibitors to register for a booth in the Exhibit Hall. [Click here to view information about exhibitors/vendors.](#)

To register, [visit the CYY webpage](#) and expand the Registration accordion. We hope to see you at CYY in March!

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Photo Credit: Becky Simpson, Director of Early Childhood, Lebanon R-III School District

In August 2023, the Lebanon Early Childhood Center, the Jordan Valley Community Health Center's Women and Children's Clinic, and the Jordan Valley Family Development and Early Childhood Education Center opened their doors at the Robert W. Plaster Center for Student Success. This marks, not only the expansion of services and resources for the youngest members of the community, but the expansion of a partnership between these organizations that began in 2017.

This partnership between the Lebanon R-3 School District and Jordan Valley provides access to health care and learning under one roof and even garnered support from the State. In July 2022, Governor Mike Parson signed House Bill 3020, which provides \$5 million in State funding for the projects. The projects

were also made possible through a \$1 million donation from the Robert W. Plaster family.

The school district and local health care entities have identified a need in the community to provide preventative health care and other services starting from birth through a child's early years. The goal of the Early Childhood Center and partnership with Jordan Valley is to support medical, nutritional, dental, mental health, social service, and educational needs in a central location for the community's early childhood families. The center also provides community-based support for parents through services and education, such as Parents as Teachers parent education program, aimed at equipping parents with what they need to feel and be successful.

Jordan Valley Community Health Center has expanded its partnership with Lebanon schools by establishing a women's and children's clinic with a large focus on providing direct services and supports to Lebanon R-3 students. By offering health and dental care, and other services like occupational therapy all under one roof, it makes resources more readily accessible for the community's youngest children and their families. Jordan Valley's Family Development and Early Childhood Education Center provides care for children six weeks to 12-years-old through child care, preschool education, and afterschool care. These students receive their medical, dental, behavioral health, and any therapies they might need while in the classroom, which provides easy access to care and relieves some stress for working parents.

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the November webinar is available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [October 2023](#)
- [September 2023](#)
- [August 2023](#)
- [July 2023](#)
- [June 2023](#)
- [May 2023](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

OOC will not host a stakeholder webinar in December. We wish you a happy holiday season!

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on Wednesday, January 31, 2024, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC website to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

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